

## **USPS Report on PRC Rate and Service Inquiries for March 2015**

The Postal Regulatory Commission referred 41 inquiries to the Postal Service in March, 2015. Customers received responses on average within 10 days.

Inquiries covered various topics that fell into three main categories:

- Delivery services (38) – i.e., the time of delivery, forwarding, and method of delivery.
- Customer services (2) – i.e., hours of service, availability of retail products, and product tracking.
- Policies/procedures (1) – i.e., general information, obtaining refunds or exchanging postage, suggestions, and international inquiries.

While many of the inquiries were customer specific, the following topic is highlighted for possible interest to a larger audience.

### **National Consumer Protection Week**

This year, National Consumer Protection Week (NCPW) was conducted March 1–7, 2015. NCPW helps consumers by providing information, materials, and services to improve their ability to protect themselves from fraud.

#### **Overview**

NCPW is a federal program designed to heighten awareness of fraud and help consumers improve their ability to combat crime. During NCPW, federal, state, and local consumer protection agencies — together with consumer organizations and industry associations — launch consumer protection and education efforts around the country. This year, the Postal Service™ and the Postal Inspection Service® are partnering to educate consumers and caregivers about foreign lottery and sweepstakes schemes that target older Americans. The goals for NCPW are:

- Increase the awareness of older Americans and their caregivers about the dangers of foreign lottery and sweepstakes schemes.
- Give consumers valuable information about protecting their assets from fraudsters.
- Provide a central location where consumers can report suspected fraud. Anyone can be a victim of foreign lottery or sweepstakes fraud, but scammers often target those whom they perceive as vulnerable.

These crimes can seriously affect the lives of victims and their families. Increasingly, the victims are older Americans and cognitively challenged individuals. During NCPW, Postal Inspectors will discuss how citizens can avoid becoming the latest victims of fraud.

Foreign lottery and sweepstakes scammers talk a good game. They ask victims to pay to play — by wire, check, money order, or cash. They try to get consumers to send money that's just for "taxes and fees," or to purchase an item to improve their chances of winning. That's illegal.

The Postal Inspection Service is warning older Americans and caregivers to beware — in a foreign lottery or fraudulent sweepstakes, it's more than just the odds that are against you. If you're contacted to play a foreign lottery or sweepstakes, do the following:

- Don't give out personal or financial information to anyone over the Internet or phone.
- Never wire or send money to anyone, anywhere, who says you've won a foreign lottery or sweepstakes.
- Don't let anyone pressure you into making an immediate decision.
- Never purchase anything until you get all the information in writing.

Foreign lotteries and fraudulent sweepstakes aren't just risky propositions; they may also be illegal. An educated public is the first line of defense. Visit <http://deliveringtrust.com> for helpful information on how to protect yourself and your loved ones from fraud.